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CELA RESEARCH REPORT

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This longitudinal study followed 10 beginning teachers from their last year of preservice education into their first two years of full-time teaching. Using sociocultural theory as a theoretical framework, we describe how these teachers appropriated a set of pedagogical tools for teaching writing. Data sources included approximately five interviews a year with the teachers, at least five classroom observations a year, as well as observations and interviews with cooperating teachers, supervisors, mentor teachers, and others. The analysis suggests that teachers drew on pedagogical tools introduced during teacher education to develop their classroom practice. Conceptual tools that were buttressed with practical strategies seemed to be most influential. The settings in which teachers taught, including their relationships with cooperating teachers and colleagues and the kinds of curriculum materials available, also shaped teachers' developing understanding and practice. Finally, pedagogical tools developed during teacher education were even more evident during the teachers' second year of teaching, as they tried to approximate their goal of good language arts instruction. The results of this study suggest the danger of making claims about what teachers do and do not learn during teacher education based only on data from their first year of teaching.

> Charles: I think of a workshop as a . . . place for you to hone a skill you have, whether it's in carpentry or art or writing. . . . I just think of [writers workshop] as a . . . consistent time every day, a structure that provides for the kids to work on the skill of . . . using written language, . . . and then added to that using mini-lessons to focus on . . . skills important for the kids to learn.
>
> Stephanie: That term [writers workshop] is . . . one of those things that I say, "someday I'm gonna do it . . . when I figure out what it is!" . . . when I think of writers workshop, I think of management. I think of first draft kids over here . . . brainstorming kids . . . over here, and get the final draft going here, and I can't do it all in my room. . . . I'm still at the "what is it?" stage.

Stephanie and Charles, graduates of the same elementary teacher education program, have different ideas about writers workshop and what it might look like in the classroom. For Charles, it represents a consistent time for honing the skill of writing. For Stephanie, it represents a management nightmare. Both of them first encountered the concept of writers workshop in their teacher education program. But what accounts for the different ways in which they have come to understand and incorporate this practice into their teaching?

Despite our understanding of the complexity of learning to teach, relatively few longitudinal studies of teacher education look at how beginning teachers adopt concepts and practices in the various settings of professional education and then modify and use them in their first few years of teaching. Most research stops with student teaching; a few studies follow teachers into the first year; fewer still examine how teachers' understanding and practice evolve in the second or third year of practice. Our study of beginning teachers learning to teach writing provides such a longitudinal look. Specifically, we ask:

- What ideas, concepts, strategies, and specific tools for teaching writing do preservice teachers develop during teacher education?
- How do their experiences in teacher education and their early experiences in schools shape their understandings and uses of these ideas and tools?
- How do beginning teachers continue to develop their understanding and practice of teaching writing over the first few years of teaching?
- How do features of the settings of teacher education and the schools affect the ways in which beginning teachers develop their understanding of teaching writing?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We have chosen to explore these questions from a sociocultural perspective, drawing specifically on activity theory (Cole, 1996; Engestrom, 1999; Leont'ev, 1981; Tulviste, 1991; Wertsch, 1981). Activity theory starts with the assumption that a person's frameworks for thinking are developed through problem-solving action carried out in specific settings. This framework focuses our attention on how beginning teachers develop goals while engaged in activity in particular settings, identify problems they must solve, and choose a set of tools to

inform and conduct their teaching. Sociocultural theory would also suggest that individuals' understandings and practices are always shaped by the various settings in which they find themselves. Using the framework of activity theory invites us to look at both the individual's experience, as well as at how settings are structured by historical forces through actions of individuals (Engestrom, 1999), in order to understand the development of an individual's practice.

Activity settings are the social contexts in which learners participate and through which they appropriate knowledge. Learning to teach is comprised of a number of distinct activity settings, including: university course work; field experiences (including student teaching); supervision; and the concentric settings of school, department, and grade level. Each of these activity settings has its own specific motive, structural features, sets of relationships, and resources for learning to teach. Although two teachers may work in the same physical setting (e.g., a school), they may have distinctly different understandings of the school setting based on the teachers' own goals, histories, and relationships within the school arena (Lave, 1988). Furthermore, one activity setting may encompass conflicting goals, creating unique problem-solving situations for the beginning teacher. For example, in the setting of student teaching, preservice teachers must balance the competing goals of demonstrating competence to earn a good grade and trying out new strategies in an effort to experiment and "practice" teaching. Part of our effort in this study is to understand how prospective and beginning teachers and those around them come to understand the problems they face in particular settings, and how they engage in solving these problems, using the resources around them.

Activity theory, like other sociocultural theories, also focuses our attention upon the use of tools (cf. Wertsch, 1991). Teachers use a wide range of pedagogical tools to construct and carry out teaching practices within activity settings. This range of tools encompasses both conceptual and more practical tools. We have defined conceptual tools as principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning, and English/language arts that teachers use as heuristics to guide their instructional decisions. They can include broadly applicable theories such as constructivism or instructional scaffolding or subject-matter specific concepts such as process writing. While conceptual tools are useful for a broader understanding of teaching and learning, they do not necessarily solve the problem of what to do in the classroom. We define practical tools as classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an

array of decisions, but instead have more local and immediate utility. These might include instructional practices such as journal writing or writers workshop, or resources such as textbooks or curriculum materials that provide such instructional practices. Activity theory provides a framework for examining how teachers understand and use these tools in their teaching. Rather than suggesting that teachers do or do not use a particular strategy or understand a particular concept, activity theory helps us understand the process through which a person adopts, or appropriates, the pedagogical tools available for use in particular activity settings (Leont'ev, 1981; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989; Wertsch; 1981).

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

For the past three years, we have been engaged in a longitudinal study of learning to teach literacy/language arts. As part of the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement, we have followed beginning teachers from their last year of teacher education into their first two years of full-time teaching.[1] We began with 15 preservice teachers, eight secondary and seven elementary, during their last two quarters of teacher education. We have followed 10 of these teachers into their first and second years of teaching. The teachers teach in public schools in eight different districts and in one private school. Five of them teach at the elementary level, two at the middle school level, and three in high school.

Data Sources

Our data consist of individual and group interviews, classroom observations, and documents. We interviewed each teacher individually on at least 11 occasions and observed them a minimum of 5 times during each of the 3 years of the study. Each observation was accompanied by a pre-observation conversation and a longer post-observation interview. At the secondary level, each classroom observation included instruction in two classes; at the elementary we observed both reading and writing, when possible. We took extensive field notes and wrote detailed analytic memos after each observation. Each year, we also conducted a group interview with the

elementary and secondary participants in which the they discussed what they were learning about teaching language arts. Group interviews, which were designed to allow us to observe interactions among members of a cohort, often engaged participants in a joint activity. All the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed; the group interviews were both audio- and video-taped.

In order to capture a fuller picture of the different activity settings, we included several additional data points each year. During student teaching, we accompanied the university supervisor on a supervisory visit, and we also observed and recorded the debriefing between the supervisor and the student teacher. We also interviewed the cooperating teachers and observed them debrief a lesson with the student teachers. During the first year of teaching, we interviewed the beginning teachers' mentor teachers, department chairs, and principals. As part of another facet of this research, we also interviewed district administrators about district policies concerning the language arts and support for beginning teachers. During the first and second years, we interviewed teachers at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, and we collected classroom artifacts, including lesson plans, written materials, and other materials related to teaching.

The design of this longitudinal study afforded us opportunities to explore many facets of the settings in which these teachers worked and to document how they learned to teach across these settings. We were not, however, able to conduct the extensive observational data we would have liked or to videotape classroom interaction. In addition, our data on the methods courses was retrospective, drawn from interviews with professors, teaching assistants, and the participants rather than from direct observation.

Data analysis has been an ongoing and iterative process. We initially identified a wide range of pedagogical tools for each participant from the interview data; we subsequently developed a coding scheme to be used across all of the data. While the focus of the larger study is on language arts in general, we first analyzed the teaching of writing as a way to bound data analysis. In our analyses, we triangulated interview and observational data, as well as data from the beginning teachers with data from their supervisors, co-operating teachers, mentors, and principals. Our first effort has been at understanding the development of each individual's understanding and practice in teaching writing; once we developed the individual cases, we began the process of looking for themes across cases.

Context

Both the elementary and secondary programs from which these teachers graduated are master's degree programs that emphasize the importance of subject matter preparation for teachers and focus on the preparation of reflective practitioners.[2] Students in the secondary language arts program took a two-quarter course sequence on the teaching of language arts of which more than a month was devoted to the teaching of writing. They used the first edition (1987) of Nancie Atwell's book, *In the Middle*, in which writers workshop is described; in class, they focused on the importance of student ownership and the social construction of meaning through writing. As they discussed the teaching of writing, they were also engaged in writing a lengthy literacy autobiography. The concept of scaffolded instruction (e.g., Bruner, 1960; Langer & Applebee, 1986) was taught in several of the teacher education courses and was further reinforced through discussion and assignments in the language arts methods class.[3] In addition, secondary students were required to complete a course on composition processes in the English department before completion of the program. All of the high school teachers in our study shared a common two-quarter English methods class but did not necessarily have the same instructors for other required courses in their program.

The elementary program included three quarters of coursework on literacy. In the first of these students studied and personally experienced reading and writing processes. The second quarter was devoted to the teaching of reading, and the third quarter was entirely devoted to teaching writing. The primary text, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Calkins, 1994) emphasized writers workshop and the importance of student ownership in writing (Atwell, 1987; Au, 1993; Calkins, 1994).[4] In class, students discussed adapting the workshop model and explored other approaches for teaching process writing. Instructors emphasized the role of scaffolding and explicit instruction in teaching writing, including the use of modeling and mini-lessons targeting specific strategies and skills. As part of the coursework, students were required to develop a literacy portfolio for a student in their practicum class and analyze the student's written work. In addition, they taught a multi-day process writing lesson including several mini-lessons. Two of the elementary teachers in our study, Charles and Stephanie, had graduated from the Special Education/Teacher Education (SPED/TEP) elementary program, which confers dual certification

in elementary education and special education. Students in the SPED/TEP program took additional special education coursework in teaching literacy.

We begin by providing brief cases of three of the ten beginning teachers in our study. One teacher, Bill, teaches at the high school level and two, Stephanie and Charles, teach elementary school. However, we have drawn on all of the case studies of our other participants in our analysis of cross-case themes.

CASE STUDIES

Bill: Going for a Test Drive in Someone Else's Car

Bill entered the teacher education program with strong beliefs about the importance of creativity and communication in teaching writing. Early in his teacher education program, prior to student teaching, he talked about the damaging effects of focusing solely on skills and structure in teaching writing:

> There's a level of inquiry that needs to be established and challenged and praised and rewarded in elementary school, or else by the time we [secondary teachers] see them, it's just..."What am I supposed to write? yeah, you want three paragraphs. Here they come. I'm going to give you three paragraphs." And so if you only build skills, you are damaging the students.

Bill's main exposure to the teaching of writing in his English methods course was reading Atwell's (1987) *In the Middle*. His early comments about not placing the teaching of skills before encouraging creativity aligned with Atwell's approach. But because of his low regard for his English methods teacher, he rejected some of her attempts to model tools for teaching aspects of the writing process in the classroom, such as the use of peer revision groups for engaging students in revision. Expressing great frustration with the lack of practical tools provided in the methods course, Bill had helped start a "shadow" methods course in which students shared materials and lesson plans that they encountered in their field experiences.

After the conclusion of his methods course and prior to his full-time student teaching experience, Bill attended a workshop on teaching writing offered by the district in which he was to student teach. The teachers in the district had decided to bring in Jane Schaffer, the developer

of a unit plan for teaching writing. Along with other teachers, Bill was wowed by Schaffer; "we were just hook, line, and sinker taken." In response to the workshop, the district adopted the Schaffer materials. Bill was so thrilled with the Schaffer materials that he made copies for his colleagues in the shadow methods course, including several other participants in this study.

Schaffer's method for teaching writing is highly structured. In the Schaffer unit, students' essays are to have a minimum of four paragraphs, as well as a minimum number of words per paragraph. Paragraphs follow a rigid pattern of topic sentence, followed by a sentence of "concrete detail," followed by two sentences expressing "commentary." The unit is also highly structured for teachers; lessons are tightly scripted, and all materials, including student handouts and quizzes, are included in the packet. While the philosophy upon which the unit is built appears to reflect an image of writing by prescription, the unit's introduction, written to the teacher, also articulates a process writing orientation: "writing is an act of discovery, a way of clarifying ideas, a social activity that often thrives upon contact with others, and a recursive process requiring time, reflection, feedback, and revision." Schaffer claims that the unit serves to demystify writing, making it "accessible to everyone" and avows that despite its scripted and formulaic appearance, the unit can be "very flexible" and "easily and successfully modified" (Schaffer, p. 6).

Bill entered student teaching with relatively few strategies for teaching writing. The Jane Schaffer materials filled this void. Presented in terms of equity and ownership, and undeniably representing a form of direct procedural scaffolding, this unit appealed to Bill for a number of reasons. First, the model provided the very kind of pedagogical tool he was seeking. Bill particularly appreciated Schaffer's emphasis on issues of equity, commenting: "at its heart that unit is about parity. . . . The unit at its heart attempts to place everybody on the same [plane], at least using the same vocabulary." This notion of offering students a kind of cultural capital appealed to Bill's sense of social justice. Finally, he justified the model in terms of student ownership. By using the unit, he hoped:

> students will learn that they are in charge of their own writing, and it's not something that someone else has to dictate for them. . . . So I hope to give them more power of their own selves, give them more ownership of pre-writing strategies.

In his student teaching, Bill followed the Schaffer model very closely, remarking, "right now I'm on a test drive in a new car, and it isn't my car." Although the unit materials claim to be pliable, Bill saw the curriculum as extremely sequential; deviating from the sequence, he believed, might hurt students. He commented, "the unit continually builds on itself and the difficult challenge for me is to not lose anyone at any given part, because if I lose them now, they're gone for the next nine weeks, and I can't get them back." As the setting of student teaching tends not to encourage improvisation, Bill may have been following the lead of his cooperating teacher or other teachers in the school in his adherence to the model. As Bill said, in another context, "it's the building policy and I live by it. And I can't make my own . . . rules in the world right now." In addition, Bill lacked a rich subject matter background in writing that might have enabled him to adapt the program.

Despite Bill's initial enthusiasm for the Schaffer model, he began to identify a tension between the very tight structure of the model and the issues of ownership that were so central to his initial beliefs about teaching writing. As Bill taught the various prewriting strategies, he did not understand why students had such a hard time coming up with ideas for their own writing. As he commented about his lower-track class:

> What I have found is that no matter what my subjects were [in my models], their subjects were identical. The first prewrite I did, my topic was sports – basketball, baseball. Well, all their prewrites were about some kind of physical activity . . . It didn't make any difference what prompt I gave them – write about anything – pick a subject! "I can't think of anything." Think of any subject whatsoever . . . Any Subject! Any subject! Am I speaking English?

Bill's comments suggest that that students did not see the content as particularly important; when what they were learning was a formula, one topic was as good as another.

During this time, Bill's university supervisor was critiquing his teaching as too teacher centered. Bill seemed to blame this, in part, on the Schaffer unit, commenting, "The nature of the writing unit [is teacher-, not student-centered] . . . But I think it's kind of difficult to establish the modeling part without it being teacher centered because the students don't have a clue how to do literature commentary until I work with them." It became evident in this and other comments that Bill was beginning to critique the Schaffer writing curriculum. Implying that the unit was somewhat unwieldy and outdated, Bill noted that it "uses its own vocabulary," such as "commentary," and that the 8-sentence paragraph model required in the unit "is something

straight out of textbooks of the 50s and 60s." Also part of the Schaffer curriculum requires students not to repeat anything in an essay, which, in Bill's words, was driving the students "bonkers." Bill added, "It's not the way I was taught to write; it's not the way the majority of students are taught to write." As Bill began to realize that his belief in ownership was not being satisfied through his current curriculum, he expressed an interest in talking with a member of his preservice cohort who had been implementing writers workshop, to "get her advice on ways to making [the teaching of writing] more writers workshop oriented, and giving them ownership of the process." He believed that in writers workshop, the teacher is not the controller; instead, "the kids just take it and they run with it, basically from the first day."

Bill's critique suggests that he was caught in an either/or conceptualization of writing pedagogy – either writing is completely structured and teacher centered, or it is student centered and unstructured. This dichotomy reflects, in part, his two primary sources for the teaching of writing – the first edition of Atwell's book, which downplays the teacher's role in structuring assignments, and the Jane Schaffer materials, which are highly teacher structured. Despite his budding critiques, Bill stayed with the Schaffer writing unit for the remainder of his student teaching. During his third and exit interviews, he talked about how he believed student writing did improve, commenting, "Anyone who did any work within the writing unit wrote a good essay. . . . [The differences between] the first draft and the second draft are amazing." He talked about intending to teach the unit again, but changing it to incorporate more literature and provide more time. Thus, even though Bill critiqued the Schaffer unit while teaching from it, he continued to espouse its virtues while simultaneously considering how he would change it if he were to teach it again.

While Bill's university supervisor was critical of the curriculum, she also conceded that it was likely to be effective in its own way. She said, "I don't like that kind of rigid structure, the formulaic approach to teaching. But it does work, you can learn the formula." When pressed to say more about why she might not choose to use the curriculum, she raised her feelings that it was "repetitive and confusing for the students." However, she did not express many of these concerns to Bill, saying that, "It is not the way I would teach writing, but then that's not for me to decide." If the supervisor had elected to talk with Bill about the pros and cons of the writing curriculum, she might have found fertile ground. However, in the supervisor's construction of the activity setting of supervision, there was little room to critique existing school practices. As she

saw it, her job was to support the student teacher in adapting to the practices of the school and the cooperating teacher.

Bill was hired by the school district in which he did his student teaching, but he was not assigned to teach 9th grade, the grade in which the Schaffer curriculum was being used. Instead, he was assigned to teach 10th and 12th grade English; the 12th used the Pacesetter curriculum, a curriculum designed around literature and text. In his first year of teaching, Bill talked little about the teaching of writing. He mentioned that in Pacesetter, the writing students do is generally an "assessment" at the end of the unit. Department policy required 10th graders to write a multi-paragraph essay on a universal theme, several creative pieces, and an in-class timed multi-paragraph essay, but did not prescribe any particular curriculum for writing instruction.

In terms of his writing instruction, Bill's first year of teaching was an utter contrast to his student teaching. Instead of focusing on the format of writing, Bill used writing as a way for students to generate and synthesize ideas. For example, we saw him use quickwrites as a precursor to discussion or as a reflective wrap-up. During a lull in a discussion of *Siddhartha* in his 10th grade class, Bill asked students to write for five minutes on a quotation that addressed a theme in the novel. Similarly, he introduced *Waiting for Godot* to his Pacesetter class by first having them write in response to a quotation. Bill also assigned longer writing assignments which were written at home and turned in to be graded. In his first year of teaching, his conception of the teaching of writing seemed to have shifted to writing as idea-generator and synthesizer (freewrites), and writing as assessment (take-home essays). Bill assigned, rather than taught, writing, during this year. We observed little explicit instruction in writing.

In the beginning of his second year of teaching, Bill alluded to having problems with this assign-and-tell approach to essays and talked about how he was working to change his approach to writing. For instance, in the Pacesetter class, he introduced the essay assignment at the beginning of a unit "so that they have some sense of purpose." Also, instead of treating the essay as a single monolithic assignment, he split the essay into three distinct parts (the event, the significance of the event, and the large significance), which corresponded to the structure of the Baldwin essay they read in the unit. He also incorporated peer response (guided by teacher-formulated questions) into each of the three steps. Peer response had not been part of Bill's original implementation of the Pacesetter curriculum. When asked where he got the idea to use peer response, Bill reluctantly acknowledged that he had done some peer response in his English methods class. Bill had also

incorporated aspects of Schaffer's approach, while dropping the formulaic structure of the unit. While Bill still professed to revere the Schaffer approach, observations of his teaching reflected a less formulaic approach to scaffolding, which he supported in a variety of ways through various facets of the process. His approach to teaching writing became less prescriptive than it had been during student teaching, but more explicit than it had been during his first year. As he concluded his second year, he continued to experiment with tools for teaching writing in trying to resolve the tension he experienced between providing students with sufficient opportunities for ownership while helping them write well-developed essays.

As Bill concluded his second year of teaching, he was well-regarded by colleagues, students, and administrators. An engaging, dynamic teacher, with a passion for teaching, he quickly became a recognized leader within the school. In a surprising turn, his former cooperating teacher transferred to his school, and Bill became her mentor as she began to teach the Pacesetter curriculum.

Stephanie: Writing on the Margins

Stephanie's initial beliefs about writing revealed that, although writing was not difficult for her, it also was not her passion. She valued personal, expressive writing and, through her early athletic experiences, she came to understand the importance of scaffolding learning, a concept further reinforced in her teacher education program.

Stephanie credited the teacher education program (both special and regular) with helping her understand and develop strategies for meeting the individual needs of children. She struggled over what she saw as a needed balance between "skills" and "expression," and between "direct instruction" and "writers workshop," worrying that children need direct instruction in specific skills but that too much structure might interfere with student ownership. At the end of coursework (before student teaching), Stephanie reconciled these tensions, in theory, by acknowledging that students need different approaches and that it is important for teachers to have "all these different ways to reach kids." In fact, she recalled her language arts professor talking about the importance of having a repertoire of teaching strategies and she firmly believed her teacher education coursework had provided her with many good ideas for teaching writing.

However, in practice, Stephanie's student teaching experience didn't provide her with many opportunities to try out ideas, work out these tensions, or experiment with pedagogical tools for teaching writing. She wasn't given much responsibility for writing instruction and, at times, her cooperating teacher would change Stephanie's lesson or stop her mid-lesson and take over. Stephanie felt that she was teaching her cooperating teacher's plan rather than her own. And, in truth, the cooperating teacher's vision of writing instruction was somewhat different from Stephanie's. The teacher described writing instruction as "you develop your skills, you see the progression, skills developing, the modeling. . . . I look for independent practice as well as guided." In contrast, Stephanie found this approach too tightly controlled and sequenced.

> She was much more scheduled with the writing, having so many sentences this day, having the draft done this day, having it edited this day, and I was hoping to set up kind of a little more of a writers workshop format where kids could be at different stages in their writing in the classroom. The first three months we spent a lot of time journal writing and getting the kids focused on the sentence structure, things like that, so we gave them a really good base, I thought, for going into a writers workshop format. We had three adults in there for writing so we had plenty of staff to have different centers and things. But I would have liked to have seen the writing be . . . more of a free form kind of thing.

At this point in her professional development, however, Stephanie was philosophic, wondering if writers workshop would lead to enough productivity. She questioned her own goals in light of her teacher's push for content coverage and the pressure of fitting into the student teaching context. Feedback from both her cooperating teacher and university supervisor focused on Stephanie's pacing which only further reinforced her concern about coverage. As the quote above reveals, Stephanie seemed to equate writers workshop with more student ownership and freedom, and she had trouble reconciling how ownership and structure could coexist. Yet, she seemed quite comfortable with the teacher's explicit instruction framework and focus on writing skills, ideas that were congruent with teacher education.

During student teaching, Stephanie had opportunities to implement the type of structured writing instruction her teacher embraced. She guided students through lessons on story elements, problem/solution, and letter writing. She analyzed student learning, provided students with structured experiences and released them to work on their own. While she was buoyed by these successful experiences, Stephanie still held on to her concern about student ownership and voice. At the conclusion of her student teaching, she noted that "even at a really young age students

have different writing styles, different styles of expression, and that as important as it is to teach basic skills and basic structures of writing formats and stuff, I think that I would like to see some freedom for expression."

Stephanie's first year of full time teaching was in a diverse, low-achieving school that had recently adopted several highly-structured packaged programs – Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) (Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1989), the Benchmarks word identification program (Gaskins & Elliot, 1991), and QUEST 2000 (a math program). Stephanie was expected to use CIRC for daily reading instruction with her second grade students. To learn the program, she attended inservice workshops and observed other teachers. For Stephanie, CIRC seemed consistent with many of the ideas she had learned in her teacher education program – aligning learner outcomes with instruction, explicit instruction, integration of reading and writing, and the structured curriculum programs she studied in the special education program. She seemed comforted to have a program that was so well-structured and in-sync with the state curriculum. She said, "it's so well matched to the state essential learnings [the state's curriculum framework] so it's almost a little brainless for me." On the other hand, Stephanie worried that the structure and whole class instructional format of CIRC made it difficult to meet the needs of the wide range of student abilities in her classroom, a concern that she had carried since her coursework.

Stephanie's school had not purchased the process writing component of CIRC; instead, they elected to do "Adventures in Writing," the writing portion connected to story reading. This was the only regularly scheduled writing time in Stephanie's weekly plan. Adventures in Writing integrates reading and writing by having students write in response to a prompt drawn from their weekly story (reading instruction). For example, after reading a story about pioneer and Indian children of the Great Plains, students are prompted, "If you could go back in time, which would you rather be – the pioneer or Indian child? Write one day's entry in your pretend journal that tells what you – a pioneer or Indian child – did during the day." The teacher's manual directs students to discuss their ideas with a partner, write their paragraphs, share the writing with their partner and ask what she likes, and then "make improvements in the story."

All the Adventures in Writing activities are structured in this way and Stephanie followed the directions generally as they were specified in the manual. After four days of working with a story, Stephanie had the children work on the Adventure in Writing activity. At times, she would talk with the students a bit before writing, building some background, but the other aspects of the

writing process and scaffolded instruction evident in her earlier thinking and in some of her student teaching experiences were not evident.

Stephanie liked this section of CIRC because of the structure and the opportunities it provided for students of different abilities to respond in various ways. Stephanie also recognized this activity as one of the only ways she was able to fit writing into her curriculum. There was no other writing scheduled. She viewed the activities as opportunities for students to "go off on tangents that are still related to the story" and to develop their own ideas and to have "ownership" in the story. She felt that when students "personalized and internalized" the story in this way, they would do better on the comprehension test given at the end of the week. So, although this writing fit with some of her beliefs about encouraging student voice and meeting individual student needs, she did the activities, in part, to help students pass their weekly CIRC reading tests and, in part, to keep pace with the other 2nd grade teacher using CIRC.

Although Stephanie didn't have many opportunities to experiment with writing instruction during student teaching and then found herself in a highly structured program with minimal writing instruction, she still held on to several of the tools she explored during coursework and she tried to implement them, in small ways, during her first year of teaching. For example, Stephanie added an "author's chair" to Adventures in Writing, a strategy modeled during her literacy methods course, so students could have more ownership and share their writing. And a few times during the year, she actually ventured into what she called a "writers workshop format." She described the process she was planning to use for writing scary Halloween stories:

> We're going to go through as a group really step by step with the brainstorming and then with the sloppy copy and then with the "what would you change about this," the revising step. And then the editing; we'll see if we can do that in a week. Ideally, I'd like to get it where they're writing more in a real writers workshop format where different kids are at different stages and that way I can focus more one to one with kids. When they get to the revising or editing stage, they'll be more independent with the brainstorming and the prewriting and the drafting.

On one hand, Stephanie's classroom practices and her words revealed her appropriation of tools learned in teacher education and her continuing struggle to balance structure and ownership. She continued to view writers workshop as a goal, one that would help her address individual needs of students. On the other hand, writers workshop and process writing seem somewhat

confounded for Stephanie at this time and, as a result, most of the student writing was first draft, on-demand writing done in response to reading (CIRC) or in other subject areas.

In her second year of teaching, Stephanie continued to use CIRC and continued not to have a specially designated time for writing instruction. However, the nature and amount of student writing changed, as did Stephanie's willingness to question her programs and implement a wider range of pedagogical tools from teacher education. She scheduled writing journals, both free responses and writing in response to a prompt, more regularly to "encourage writing, to make writing fun and to personalize it for them so they are not always just writing for an assignment." Similarly, she continued to encourage different genres and purposes for writing, convinced that students should see that writing is connected to real life. In addition, Stephanie engaged her students in several longer writing projects such as writing second grade stories and instructions for Amelia Bedelia, each of which was taken through the entire writing process. Stephanie recognized the limitations of her writing program, yet she felt she couldn't take the time from CIRC to do more. She acknowledged that

> CIRC writing isn't a complete enough writing program for me. We get lots of different genres in, we talk a lot about sentence format . . . but there's more I would like to do with writing than that – going through the full writing process. Adventures in Writing is fun and really, as useful as it is, [the students] don't create that much of a finished product. And I could change it so that they did, but that's not how I want to use the time schedule.

Stephanie recognized a possible solution to the problem but chose not to act on it. She did, however, take a more active role in shaping her curriculum and make changes inside the CIRC program.

With encouragement from her principal, Stephanie and two colleagues began to work on revisions to CIRC that would eventually be shared with colleagues. Their aim was to modify this whole-class program to meet the range of abilities in their second grade classrooms. In the meantime, using strategies from teacher education, Stephanie modified CIRC and Adventures in Writing within her own classroom in an effort to address the problems she had identified in her first year. For example, she did more in-depth prewriting activities before students began their responses to Adventures in Writing and she sometimes linked CIRC reading and writing activities through skill instruction rather than simply by topic. So, rather than simply using writing to

respond to reading, Stephanie tried to create new opportunities to provide explicit writing instruction within the structure of CIRC.

Stephanie clearly struggled with the demands of delivering the CIRC program and, as evident from the quote that opens this report, made during her second year of teaching, she felt uncertain about the concept and the management of writers workshop; in fact, she felt "guilty" not to be using writers workshop. Seen as a strong teacher by her colleagues and principal, Stephanie assumed new leadership roles as a CIRC trainer, co-operating teacher, and representative to the district literacy committee. She used those opportunities to reflect on and further appropriate pedagogical tools she had explored in teacher education, clear that it was "good for me to really try to think about and justify why I do what I do and what do the kids need." Although she continued to teach CIRC as it was required, Stephanie began to make important changes both within and on the margins of the program.

Charles: Scaffolding All the Way

Charles came to teacher education with a strong background in writing and positive school writing experiences. Throughout his college experience as an English major and his early school experiences, Charles valued his teachers' high expectations, specific feedback and concern for him as a writer. Charles carried this vision of teaching into his early work as a tutor, mentor for high school students, and later, into his teaching.

Like Stephanie, Charles was also in the special education/regular education track of the teacher education program. For him, these two tracks seemed to complement each other rather than cause dissonance between the highly structured direct instruction approach he studied in special education and the more process-oriented approaches he studied in his literacy classes. In fact, he integrated ideas he learned in both programs rather seamlessly in his vision of good language arts instruction and his early practice. He believed that students need to understand and experience writing for many different purposes and have ownership in their work. At the same time, he acknowledged that without the specific tools of effective writing, his students would be at a disadvantage. And, he saw his job in teacher education as learning strategies that would help him maximize each child's abilities.

Although Charles came into the program with a strong background and positive experiences, he emphatically credited his professors and coursework for his conceptualizations about writing and for his understanding of instruction – specifically the concept of scaffolding and the importance of having a range of pedagogical tools. He attributed his understanding to the modeling and practice his professors provided in class.

Charles' student teaching placement in a 4th grade urban setting supported what he had learned in the teacher education program, and, in fact, his cooperating teacher's description of good language arts instruction echoed many of the elements Charles described as part of his coursework. She defined good language arts instruction as

> Very clear direction, very clear instruction, and direct instruction . . . This is the concept I'm going to teach . . . we're going to do some examples of it. You're going to do it on your own, and then you're going to apply it. Actually carry children through the steps so that by the time you've finished the concept, and it may be an ongoing thing for a very long time, . . . the children will be able to reach the highest level of thinking which is apply what they've learned and making connections.

Elements of modeling, explicit instruction, practice, and release of responsibility are clearly evident in the teacher's direct instruction model. Less evident, but mentioned in her interviews, are references to giving students meaningful purposes for writing, student ownership, and meeting individual needs, ideas that were very important to Charles. Although the teacher's approach was strongly guided by a direct instruction model, she supported Charles' experimentation and encouraged him to rely on his conceptual understandings and strategies for good instruction rather than on prescribed curriculum or on one instructional model. She urged him to

> Just take what's out there already and from that you can build what you're going to do and be creative. But first you need to start with what's out there. . . . and pick and choose what's in there. Then from that develop your own things – things you want to do.

Charles believed this way of thinking about teaching made it easier for him to do what he wanted to do. So, in addition to student teaching with someone who had a similar vision of teaching and who modeled many of the strategies he had encountered in teacher education, Charles was

encouraged to experiment with practical strategies from a conceptual basis, and most important, he saw the opportunity and took it. He said,

> The best stuff I've had has been being able to try things out and see what works and what doesn't work and having her [the cooperating teacher] to fall back on if I really screw up or if I really do good for her to point those things out.

With this compatibility between the cooperating teacher's philosophy and the concepts and pedagogy learned in teacher education, Charles taught process writing, conferenced with students, integrated writing into other subject areas, taught lessons on the "six traits" (described below), held writers workshops, used journals with the students, and experimented with levels of scaffolding. We saw him implement and heard him talk about using task analysis to be sure that teaching was logical and, at the same time, using assessment and knowledge of his students to make sure instruction was at an appropriate level of difficulty. At the end of his teacher education program, Charles had developed a deep commitment to scaffolded instruction and possessed a range of strategies for implementing it in practice.

> I think my goals are still the same [as when I entered the program], but it's how to get to those goals now [that is] different. . . . scaffolding . . . is something that probably I had an idea about, but now I have something concrete to think about when I'm planning a lesson.

Charles was recruited and hired at the school where he student taught. In his first year as a 3rd grade teacher, he reflected his cooperating teachers' advice as he talked about trying to find a style of teaching that worked for him. But, unlike Stephanie, Charles was freer to find his style because there were fewer constraints on what and how he taught. There were, however, two overarching district-wide guideposts for his writing instruction. One was the district curriculum guide, which lists learning outcomes for students at each grade, and the other was the district's emphasis on six-trait writing, a program using criteria (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions) drawn from exemplary writing to perform systematic analyses of student writing. Six traits writing forms the basis of district and statewide writing assessment. He described his curriculum as "basically just that we focus on those six traits – [and] for [the students] to be able to write a personal letter, expository piece, narrative piece and a persuasive piece. Those are the expectations."

Within these general guidelines, Charles implemented many of the pedagogical tools he learned and practiced in teacher education coursework and during student teaching. For example, within writers workshop, which was scheduled for 40 minutes each day, Charles taught mini-lessons, held writing conferences, integrated writing with other subject areas, and carefully scaffolded and supported his students' learning. He also made sure to attend to district outcomes for his grade such as six traits and specific genres, and to prepare his students for the standardized test given at his grade level. In some ways, these district policies and expectations provided a scaffold to guide Charles' decisions about curriculum but the rest was up to him. Rather than hampering his instruction, however, such guidelines seemed to provide Charles with some structure within which he could implement the pedagogical tools he had so well appropriated from teacher education.

Even as a first-year teacher, Charles was able to create a cohesive writing program for his students; he strategically pulled from the district curriculum guide, his language arts textbooks, and his bank of pedagogical tools to essentially construct his own program. So, for example, he developed a writing project based on a play the students had seen, engaging students in developing and publishing their own versions of the play, and using instructional strategies such as story maps, peer editing, and conferencing to guide the students. Even when he felt a need to do Daily Oral Language as other teachers in his school were doing to prepare students for the standardized test, Charles reconstructed the activity as Daily Editing Practice to make it fit with students' experiences with process writing.

Charles retained his reflective stance toward his teaching of writing throughout his first year. Although he didn't feel confident about his writing instruction and said that he let it "slide" the first year, he was continually assessing his own instruction and his students' learning. He realized that writers workshop didn't occur every day as he had planned nor were students writing as much as he wanted. He also worried that he might be too directive in his instruction and wanted to find a balance between what he called "direct instruction" and "exploration." He developed a new goal, to find such a balance, in the context of his teaching, a goal which influenced his decisions in the subsequent year.

In his second year of teaching, Charles continued to develop his curriculum and pedagogical strategies and to act on his concerns from year 1. In keeping with the district's focus on the direct writing assessment and the "six traits," Charles set a goal of having his students write well in

narrative, expository, and persuasive modes and demonstrate "control" over three or four of the traits. For him, the emphasis on six traits writing was more than a district push; he felt it provided diagnostic information, "something to inform your instruction – you have a language, you have a way to think about it, to talk about it. . . . It means a lot more than the writing section on the ITBS. What does that tell you?"

Charles' second year goals also included having his students enjoy writing. He felt that he had been inconsistent the previous year about having students write every day and that they needed time to practice and get comfortable with writing. He had students keep two kinds of journals, expanded opportunities to integrate writing with social studies and science, and instituted writers workshop every day.

As evident from his description of writers workshop at the beginning of this article, Charles continued to balance his explicit instruction ("mini-lessons") with student ownership and engagement. His writing lessons were quite structured, providing students with strategies and models for writing, yet Charles viewed these models as supports rather than blueprints, encouraging students to "use them or not" as they created their own work. He was proud of how, in his second year, he found better approaches for teaching students skills and strategies for writing so they had the "tools" to help them write well. We observed several sophisticated lessons, part of a two week project on poetry in which Charles balanced explicit instruction with student engagement and exploration as students were scaffolded through the entire writing process to final published pieces. Whole class lessons were supported with small group and individual follow-up and with many opportunities for students to work collaboratively.

At the end of his second year, Charles had accomplished many of the goals he had set for himself and, in contrast with his first year, he felt more successful at teaching writing than any other subject. He used and adapted what he learned from district inservice, his principal, and his own practice to continue to build his vision and repertoire of tools for good writing instruction.

WHAT TEACHERS APPROPRIATED AND WHY: CROSS-CASE THEMES

The power of ideas, the need for practical tools

Teacher education coursework provided these teachers with a set of conceptual tools, including a process-orientation to writing, the concept of scaffolding, and the importance of ownership in teaching writing. Two of the most useful conceptual tools for teaching writing that the beginning teachers appropriated were the concepts of instructional scaffolding and writing process. All of the teachers explicitly used the term scaffolding to talk about their teaching, and we saw evidence of the principles of scaffolding (as it was presented in the teacher education program) in their teaching. All of the teachers also attended to elements of writing process in their instruction. However, the ways in which they appropriated and used the concept varied in response both to the pedagogy of teacher education and the contexts in which they found themselves working. While the secondary teachers partially appropriated a set of conceptual tools, they bemoaned their lack of practical knowledge. In contrast, the elementary teachers felt well prepared, both conceptually and practically, for the challenges of teaching writing. However, the classroom context did not always support the practices they had learned.

The concept of scaffolding appears rather prominently in the materials from the secondary language arts methods course. Students were required to read an article on instructional scaffolding (Langer & Applebee, 1986), and the rubric for assessing lesson plans for teaching writing specifically used the language of instructional scaffolding. In their lesson plans, students were asked to provide opportunities for student engagement and ownership and to provide support for student learning. Instructional scaffolding language also appears in the guidelines for other assignments.

While the concept was initially introduced in the language arts methods course, aspects of scaffolding were also introduced in other courses, such as the courses on learning and assessment. The course on learning theory emphasized the importance of student ownership in learning, and also drew upon Bruner's work on instruction (Bruner, 1960). The assessment course provided extensive scaffolding for the development of a unit plan and assessments. However, while the methods course introduced the concept of scaffolding in relation to the teaching of writing, students were not explicitly taught *how* to scaffold student writing. Some of students' comments address this directly: "writing process theory was too much learning about and not

enough learning how to implement." Another student commented on the need for more concrete examples. "I crave practical, concrete discussion . . . deep understanding must include learning how to implement theory and serendipity."

The strategy for teaching writing that the secondary teachers mention most frequently is modeling. One student wrote, "One of the ways learning occurs is by being provided with an authentic example and the modeling of it." Another student teacher commented that "I knew how to model how I read for 'theme' in a novel . . . and I modeled what they would be doing in writing." While evidence of students' appropriation of modeling as a strategy continued to be apparent in their classroom practice, they did not seem to have a range of other strategies for teaching writing. While many of them initially loved Atwell's workshop approach, they also began to see the difficulties in orchestrating such complex instruction.

> I still wrestle with the dilemma between letting students write what is meaningful to them, but which may not challenge them, and teaching them to write in ways that push them beyond their comfort zone, but that they may not have any personal connections to. While I admire Nancie Atwell's ability to handle this dilemma brilliantly, I don't feel that I have the experience or energy at this point to resolve it myself.

Perhaps more importantly, the concepts provided by their methods course were not necessarily buttressed with a range of practical tools. As they critiqued the course for not being practical enough, the student teachers eagerly sought materials and methods from other sources. Bill acquired the Schaffer materials in the powerful context of student teaching. The workshop he attended and the written materials for the unit supported many of the concepts he had already encountered in teacher education, and the experienced teachers with whom he was working offered an enthusiastic response to her materials. Bill's equally enthusiastic endorsement of the curriculum convinced his peers in the teacher education program to try the materials as well.

Nancy, another high school teacher in our study, had a very similar experience with the Schaffer materials. In her first year of teaching, she struggled to find ways to teach writing to her students. Nancy explicitly stated that she did not have the tools she needed to teach writing. Referring back to her teacher education coursework, she claimed, "No one has ever taught me how to teach essay writing, ever . . . Methods class wasn't very good." Nancy initially resisted using the Schaffer materials. She commented:

> The older teachers . . . tend to use Jane Schaffer's write-by-number technique, where they do a paragraph that consists of a topic sentence and they write a topic sentence till they turn blue and then it consists of a chunk, and a chunk is one point of fact or a concrete detail to two points of commentary and you do that, three chunks, and then a concluding sentence, and there's your paragraph . . . it's like filling in the blanks . . . .My philosophy is that no one writes that way. The way you're going to become a good writer is to just do it – writing is not something that you can necessarily teach, writing is something that you do and then work with from there.

Her comment that "writing is not something that you can necessarily teach" reflects her own uncertainty about what her ideas imply for classroom practice. Nancy ultimately decided to adopt the curriculum, in part because it solved a pressing problem for her – how to teach essay writing to her students.

We see the teachers' adoption of the Schaffer materials as evidence, somewhat ironically, of their partial appropriation of certain conceptual tools from their teacher education program, including the concepts of scaffolding, process-writing, and equity. They use these concepts to explain and critique the materials. At the same time, their adoption of such a structured and formulaic approach to writing seems to suggest more an even more partial appropriation of the issues of ownership, and writing as exploration and negotiation, which were also addressed in their program. The materials solved a pressing problem for these beginning teachers, as they struggled to teach writing without a range of strategies. In fact, one interpretation of our data is that the Schaffer unit plan itself served as a scaffolding for the teachers' learning. The unit plan shaped their understandings of scaffolding and writing process. While Nancy initially rejected the materials because they seemed formulaic to her, they also reinforced her understanding of scaffolding as a step-by-step, linear process. While all of the teachers who used the unit continued to profess their support for its outcomes, they also adapted the model in various ways, taking language and strategies from the materials without necessarily following the blueprint rigidly.

The elementary program (and the special education/teacher education program in particular) strongly emphasized the concept of scaffolding. As in the secondary program, scaffolding was discussed in courses on learning and assessment, and the text presented a workshop approach to teaching writing (Calkins, 1994). However, the elementary instructors placed the workshop model along a continuum of approaches to structuring writing instruction, discussing various models and strategies for teaching and engaging students in process writing and directly

addressing the pros and cons of writers workshop. The course assignments required students to teach a multi-day writing project with some attention to process writing but not necessarily within a workshop model.

Practical and conceptual tools were intertwined in the pedagogy of the literacy methods course. The instructors introduced a range of strategies such as conferencing, journal writing, peer editing groups, modeling and "author's chair" as ways to scaffold students' writing. The instructors modeled these approaches in the classroom and then debriefed the approaches from both a conceptual and practical perspective. Charles argued how important this modeling was for his own learning.

> The first quarter, one thing I really appreciated about the class as a teacher was [the professor] scaffolded and showed us how she was scaffolding. But as a student, just the fact that she scaffolded and the whole process of doing modeling and being really explicit about the modeling and assessing all along the way – doing modeling, doing guided practice, doing the guided independent work, all the way assessing how students are doing . . . That whole framework . . . that also changed the way I approach the way I teach.

Of all of the teachers, Charles most fully appropriated the concepts of scaffolding and writing process into his teaching. In part, this reflects the context in which he works. He worked for three years at the same school, first student and then full-time teaching, a school that supported his understanding of writing instruction. Unlike Stephanie and Bill, he did not work within a prescribed curriculum that might conflict with his ideas. He was able to create assignments and curriculum that reflected what he knew. In contrast, the other teachers initially had to work around the edges of a prescribed curriculum. The power of ideas, then, is tempered by the pragmatics of the settings in which the teachers work.

The press of curriculum materials

Perhaps one of the most striking findings from the first year of full-time teaching has to do with the power of curriculum materials. The curricular materials that beginning teachers encounter can dramatically influence their learning. The teachers in our study inherited a wide range of curricular materials their first year of teaching, from general rubrics, such as the six

traits of writing, to curriculum guidelines, to packaged programs, such as CIRC. During the first year of teaching, the beginning teachers generally welcomed curricular materials for teaching writing. As the teaching of writing can be a messy, chaotic endeavor, the appeal of a package approach cannot be ignored.

In addition, some of these programs, such as CIRC and the Schaffer materials, included many of the concepts that the student teachers learned in teacher education. The introduction to the Schaffer unit, for example, stresses the importance of explicitly teaching students to write, not just assigning writing and then grading it. So in many ways, the unit seems to support the conceptual tools students had learned. What presents a rather stark contrast, however, is the lack of any ownership for students in their writing. The content or purpose of writing is less important than mastering the formula.

In some of the same ways, CIRC also echoes concepts emphasized in the teacher education program. It offers structure and attention to student ownership and voice. Since Stephanie used only the reading portion of CIRC, she didn't expect it to provide guidance for process writing or writers workshop. Instead she took advantage of the writing prompts to satisfy her desire for student ownership and personal response, albeit in response to reading. However, the time demands of CIRC and its limited attention to writing instruction precluded the possibility of having a fully developed process writing program. Interestingly, the CIRC manual suggests that students spend three days responding to a prompt so they can go through the writing process. Ironically, Stephanie didn't realize this until her second year when she was preparing to teach a class on CIRC. The CIRC reading manual didn't provide enough support for a teacher who had not fully appropriated process writing and there was not enough time in the schedule to break away from the curriculum materials. These factors, combined with the school-wide emphasis on reading and Stephanie's partial appropriation and confounding of process writing and writers workshop led to a somewhat fragmented writing program.

Bill and Nancy seemed to understand the tension between the Schaffer materials and some of their other ideas for teaching, but their own need for classroom strategies took precedence. Nancy, for example, commented that she made a deliberate choice to defer thinking about ownership.

> I've chosen my battles, I've set my goals, and right now ownership is not one of the things that I'm working towards. Later on down the road, I might say, OK now let's see if we can incorporate ownership into this mess, but I'm not professionally ready to even think about it. I'm still working on scaffolding writing process, conventions, and integrating all those together. I'm not ready.

This tension between ownership and structure was also reflected in the teachers' reassessment of the texts used in their literacy and language arts methods courses.[5] While the teachers originally loved the Atwell (1987) and Calkins (1994) texts used in the program, they eventually saw them as not very useful in their own classrooms. Hannah, one of the other beginning elementary teachers in our study commented:

> What's interesting is Lucy Calkins is big on the ownership, but not huge on the structure, I don't think, in the sense of the scaffolding and the structure part. . . . I think she believes in all the stages, but it seems like taking the time to scaffold it along the way, teaching the six traits, and all the different things that go along with being a successful writer isn't there, so you need more, I think.

This teacher's comments illustrate her appropriation of a number of concepts from teacher education, including scaffolding, six traits, and the stages of the writing process. She uses these concepts to critique Calkins, couching her critique in the tension between structure and ownership.

This tension between structure and ownership in the teaching of writing has a long history within the field of composition. Different traditions in composition studies resolve this tension in different ways. The expressivist tradition, represented by Peter Elbow, for example, puts the primary emphasis on the writer's voice, while other traditions, such as the current traditional rhetoric, emphasize the importance of mastering fixed rhetorical structures (cf. Berlin, 1982; Gere, 1986). The struggle that these beginning teachers engaged in, then, is part of much longer struggle over the definition of the subject matter. The curriculum materials they encountered in the field bear remnants of various movements and theories, but rarely are these made explicit to beginning teachers. They saw their struggles over the tension between structure and ownership as private ones, reflective of their own lack of experience, rather than as larger issues within the field of language arts. This perceived tension between structure and ownership became a problem that the beginning teachers needed to solve. The particular curriculum materials they encountered influenced the ways in which they did so.

By the second year of teaching, there is some evidence that the teachers had begun to critique and repair curriculum materials. Bill confronted the importance of ownership in students' writing and the difficulty of fostering ownership while teaching a formula. The curriculum materials became a foil for the development of his own thinking, as well as a pedagogical tool he felt he could adapt for different purposes. Allison, another teacher in this study, who remained committed to the Schaffer unit, also began to adapt the materials in her second year of teaching. In using the CIRC materials in her first year of teaching, Stephanie found very few opportunities to engage students in more process-oriented writing. However, by her second year of teaching, she added more journal writing, opportunities for sharing, and process writing projects to her curriculum and adapted the CIRC writing prompts to provide more opportunities for her students to write in more open-ended ways.

Pentimento

Perhaps what is most striking across these cases, however, is the teachers' ability to hold on to important concepts, even when they were trying out practices that were antithetical, in certain ways, to their initial conceptions. The pedagogical tools emphasized in teacher education reappeared in the second year of teaching, when the teachers talked explicitly about worrying about how to teach *well*. They use concepts from the program, such as student ownership and voice, to critique aspects of the practices they adopted during their first year of teaching. Other teachers talked of hearing the voices of their teacher educators as they reflected on their teaching. Frank, one of the middle school teachers in our study commented, "One of [my professors said] 'don't waste students' time . . . there's a lot better things they could be doing, [so] if you're going to make them sit down and do work, you better make it worthwhile.' . . . and I don't use their time wisely, and I wanted to get better at it . . . "

Teacher education provided a vision of ideal practice, an image of how teachers thought their classrooms should ultimately run. As one participant commented, what she got from a course on interdisciplinary curriculum was "that I understood the way it should look. . . . What an ideal, integrated program should include." Teachers talked of holding themselves to higher standards in their second year of teaching, as they tried to get closer to their vision of teaching language arts.

One of the skills these teachers attributed to teacher education is the ability to reflect on their own teaching. In the first group interview, the teachers joked about becoming "giant reflectors" as a result of the constant emphasis on reflective practice. But the habit of reflection, built into their program, endured into their first two years of teaching. Reflection provided the catalyst for the re-emergence of some of the pedagogical tools in their second year. Reflective practice depends upon having a set of ideas with which to reflect. In the process of rethinking their practice, the teachers used concepts from the program to help them make sense of their successes and failures. For example, in her first year of teaching, Stephanie didn't encourage invented spelling, something that had been suggested in her methods course. She returned to it in her second year even after attending a workshop where the presenter "blasted" invented spelling because it struck her that her students "are not gonna be writers if they can't do invented spelling. It'll kill them if they have to focus on correctness of spelling. And also, it would kill me." Pedagogical tools developed during teacher education provided a set of frames through which to view teaching and a technical language to make sense of what the teachers were experiencing.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

The vision thing

Teacher education can play an important role in helping preservice teachers construct a set of tools for teaching writing, and language arts more generally. In this study, the concepts of scaffolding, process writing, and student ownership all helped create a vision of writing instruction towards which the beginning teachers can work. Even when teachers found it difficult to attain this vision in their first year of teaching, they continued to use these tools to critique their own practice and to make sense of their experiences.

Conceptual tools, however, need to be exemplified by practical tools and strategies in order for teachers to more fully appropriate them. A vision can seem terribly insubstantial without the concrete strategies to attain it. The success of methods courses for teaching writing seemed to rest, in part, on the extent to which students were able to gain tools for implementing the concepts they were learning. Theory becomes real only through practice. Without such practical

tools and the opportunities to try them out, teachers may not continue to develop their understandings of concepts such as ownership or recursive processes in writing.[6]

Providing teachers with pedagogical tools for teaching is important but not sufficient. Teacher educators must provide opportunities for preservice teachers to experience these tools in practice. Teachers' more refined understandings of the tools emerged through the activity of teaching and learning. While student teaching has traditionally been the way in which teachers experiment with what they have learned in coursework, our study, as well as the literature on student teaching, would suggest that student teaching can constrain, as well as encourage, experimentation (Dewey, 1904; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Another widely-used approach is for professors to model these tools in the teacher education classroom and then debrief the modeling with students. Yet another approach is to use other materials from practice, including videotapes or hypermedia, to provide experience with a range of pedagogical tools (Lampert & Ball, 1998). Another, still, is for teacher education programs to support teachers in their early years of teaching as they navigate the complexities of learning to teach.[7]

Beyond coursework, our data suggest that student teaching continues to be a setting which powerfully influences the ways in which teachers appropriate knowledge. Charles, for example, was able to see a variety of tools discussed in teacher education used in the classroom of his cooperating teacher. However, it is not clear that student teaching placements must be consistent with coursework to be valuable. For some preservice teachers, a contrasting placement encouraged them to think more deeply about the concepts and strategies they had learned in coursework (cf. Hollingsworth, 1989). In fact, two of the most successful beginning teachers in our study were in student teaching placements that did not exemplify the best of what they had learned. They continued to appropriate knowledge, however, because they were supported in taking a reflective stance toward these experiences.

Predictable problems

One of the striking findings of this study was the degree to which these beginning teachers, teaching at different grade levels and in different contexts, were struggling with some of the same underlying issues. The dilemma of balancing the need for student ownership with attention to

structure in the teaching of writing represents one such problem. Teacher education could play more of a role in identifying predictable dilemmas in the teaching of writing, as well as literacy more generally, and helping preservice teachers negotiate responses to these dilemmas. Teacher educators could showcase curriculum materials that exemplify different responses to these problems. Rather than ignore packaged curriculum materials, teacher education should provide opportunities for students to bring their reflective stance to these materials during coursework. In the throes of the first year of teaching, it is difficult for teachers to question programs or to have the time, support, and confidence to adapt them to their developing conceptions of teaching.

Our study suggests the danger of making claims about what teachers did and did not learn in teacher education based on data from their first year of teaching. Teacher education can affect how beginning teachers think about teaching writing, even if the ideas are not fully appropriated into their classroom practice in the first year. The pedagogical tools provided by teacher education, along with a reflective stance towards teaching, provided these teachers with a vision of teaching writing that has stayed with them. Like paint on a canvas that re-emerges with time, concepts and ideas began to resurface in important ways in the second year of teaching. Tools that seemed superfluous during the difficult first year of teaching suddenly found use as second-year teachers reconstructed their understandings and practice.

Context also matters. Aspects of school and district context, including curriculum materials and professional development opportunities, can support or thwart continuing learning and fuller appropriation of ideas and practices for teaching writing. Whether or not Stephanie figures out how to incorporate writers workshop or process writing into her curriculum will depend as much upon her school context as her own developing understanding. Whether or not Nancy reincorporates ideas of student ownership into her practice will undoubtedly be affected by her school district's formal adoption of the Schaffer materials. As we follow these teachers into their third year of teaching, they are still learning to teach writing.

ENDNOTES

1. This study is part of a larger cross-institutional study that ultimately will include data from four different teacher education programs. We would like to acknowledge our colleagues Peter Smagorinsky and Jane Agee, who are conducting similar longitudinal research of beginning secondary teachers.
2. We had extensive data from these courses, including interviews with the instructors and teaching assistants, as well as lesson plans and course readers. In addition, for the secondary course we had a teaching portfolio compiled by the instructor.
3. Scaffolding, as defined by Langer & Applebee (1986) includes five components: ownership, appropriateness, structure, collaboration, and transfer of control.
4. The concept of ownership has been discussed by Atwell (1987), Au (1993), Calkins (1994) and others. In general, it involves students valuing their own abilities, seeing learning as a worthwhile enterprise, and choosing to engage in particular tasks. Specifically, in writing, ownership implies that students view their writing as meaningful, personally satisfying work. They choose to write on their own and are provided opportunities in school to write on self-selected topics.
5. In one of the group interviews, we made up cards of tools for teaching writing that the teachers had talked about in previous years and asked the them to put the cards along a continuum ranked from most useful to least useful and then to talk about their reasons for their rankings.
6. However, if teachers appropriate practical tools that are not grounded in concepts, they may find it difficult to critique new strategies and curriculum material or to envision alternatives.
7. This study, in part, provided such an arena for beginning teachers to continue to reflect upon their teaching.

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